In the Claims:

Please amend the claims as follows. Applicant has included herewith a complete claim set with insertions and deletions indicated by underlining and strikethrough, respectively.

- 1. (Currently amended) A method of diagnosing a cardiovascular condition characterized by aberrant expression of a <u>Fit-1/ST2</u> nucleic acid molecule or an expression product thereof, said method comprising:
- a) contacting a biological sample from a subject with an agent, wherein said agent specifically binds to said <u>Fit-1/ST2</u> nucleic acid molecule, an expression product thereof, or a fragment of an expression product thereof; and
- b) measuring the amount of bound agent and determining therefrom if the expression of said <u>Fit-1/ST2</u> nucleic acid molecule or of an expression product thereof is aberrant, <u>wherein</u> the aberrant expression being is diagnostic of the condition;

wherein the nucleic acid molecule is at least one nucleic acid molecule selected from the group consisting of Fit 1, CD44, Lot 1, AA892598, and Mrg-1.

2.-5. (Canceled)

- 6. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the condition is a cardiovascular condition is selected from the group consisting of myocardial infarction, stroke, arteriosclerosis, and heart failure.
- 7. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the <u>cardiovascular</u> condition is cardiac hypertrophy.
- 8. (Currently amended) A method for determining the stage of a cardiovascular condition in a subject characterized by aberrant expression of a nucleic acid molecule or an expression product thereof, comprising:

monitoring a sample from a patient, for a parameter selected from the group consisting of

(i) a <u>Fit-1/ST2</u> nucleic acid molecule selected from the group consisting of Fit-1, vacuolar ATPase, CD44, Lot-1, AA892598, and Mrg-1,

- (ii) a polypeptide encoded by the nucleic acid of part (i),
- (iii) a peptide fragment of derived from the polypeptide, and
- (iv) an antibody which selectively binds the polypeptide or peptide,

as a determination of the stage of said vascular cardiovascular condition in the subject.

9. (Canceled)

- 10. (Currently amended) The method of claim 8, wherein the step of monitoring comprises contacting the sample with a detectable agent selected from the group consisting of:
- (a) an isolated nucleic acid molecule which selectively hybridizes-under stringent eonditions to the nucleic acid molecule of (i),
- (b) an antibody <u>or an antigen binding fragment thereof</u> which selectively binds the polypeptide of (ii), or the peptide of (iii), and
 - (c) a polypeptide or peptide which binds the antibody of (iv).

11.-36. (Canceled)

- 37. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the sample is a biological fluid or a tissue.
- 38. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the biological fluid is blood or serum.
- 39. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the agent is (i) an isolated nucleic acid molecule that hybridizes to the Fit-1/ST2 nucleic acid molecule or (ii) an antibody that binds the polypeptide encoded by the Fit-1/ST2 nucleic acid molecule, or an antigen-binding fragment of the antibody.
- 40. (New) The method of claim 39, wherein the nucleic acid or the antibody is labeled with a radioactive label or an enzyme.

- 41. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the cardiovascular condition is characterized by mechanical strain, mechanical overload or mechanically-induced deformation in cardiac cells or tissue.
- 42. (New) The method of claim 8, wherein the sample is a biological fluid or a tissue.
- 43. (New) The method of claim 8, wherein the biological fluid is blood or serum.
- 44. (New) The method of claim 10, wherein the nucleic acid or the antibody is labeled with a radioactive label or an enzyme.
- 45. (New) The method of claim 10, comprising assaying the sample for the peptide.
- 46. (New) The method of claim 8, wherein the cardiovascular condition is selected from the group consisting of myocardial infarction, stroke, arteriosclerosis, and heart failure.
- 47. (New) The method of claim 8, wherein the cardiovascular condition is cardiac hypertrophy.
- 48. (New) The method of claim 8, wherein the cardiovascular condition is characterized by mechanical strain, mechanical overload or mechanically-induced deformation in cardiac cells or tissue.